



Minutes
Public Records Board – Policy and Governance Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 14, 2017
1:00 - 2:30 pm
Conference Room 437 (south end of building)
Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison

Committee members present: Matt Blessing, Melissa Schmidt and Peter Sorce. Carl Buesing's absence was excused.

Approval of August 3, 2017, Meeting Minutes: Chair Blessing asked for "no longer in print" to be substituted for language in the fourth paragraph of the minutes. With that change the minutes were unanimously approved.

Updating PRB Policy Documents: Chair Blessing thanked Kathryn Egeland, State Records Center Program and Policy Analyst, for her good work on updating the policy documents so they were consistent, clear and succinct and for getting feedback from records officers and the Operations and Training Advisory Committee (OTAC). The committee discussed the proposal to remove the word "minimum" from the documents.

Ms. Egeland said Records Officers are in the trenches everyday trying to manage records and make sure that records are transferred or disposed of in a timely manner. However, the word "minimum" has been construed by some to mean that they can keep their records forever, which is a disservice to the efforts of Records Officers.

Chair Blessing said he is concerned that deleting "minimum" could cause confusion. Ms. Schmidt said that Section 16.61 (4) Wis. Stats. provides that an agency needs permission from the Public Records Board to destroy records but does not give the Board authority to tell agencies that they must destroy records.

Ms. Barth questioned the need for the word "minimum" in the policy. Ms. Schmidt said that when the Board developed the policy documents it is her understanding that they intended to use the word "minimum" and it has a meaning that hammers the point about destroying records before the time approved by the Board.

Chair Blessing noted that there was consensus to retain the word "minimum" in the policy documents.

Ms. Schmidt thanked Ms. Egeland for her work in updating the policy documents and providing a uniform voice to each document. She suggested that in the future when policies are amended, that the Board look at the impact on other policy documents.

Municipal Records Manual: Chair Blessing explained that Andrew Baraniak, WHS Local Government Records Archivist, has spent the fall traveling and meeting with local government groups about the Municipal Records Manual. Mr. Baraniak explained that the Municipal Records Manual has been developed as a General Records Schedule for local governments. The Committee discussed whether the document can be guidance or policy and reviewed Section 19.21(4)(a) and (b) Wis. Stats.

Mr. Baraniak said that municipalities strongly support the General Records Schedule approach because it is simplified and clearly describes which records WHS would like transferred. Ms. Schmidt said the statute focuses on the responsibilities of the town, city or village but it does not prohibit the Board from setting a longer retention period than seven years.

Abbie Norderhaug, WHS Assistant State Archivist, asked if adoption of the Municipal GRS should be an “Opt In” or “Opt Out.” The Committee suggested it be an Opt In adoption like the County GRS.

The Committee adjourned.